12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Haya FN8

H 342 As indicated above, the floor is covered with grass. Various domestic utensils may be seen, stuck into thin screens of plant material.

H 342 178 But this old, beautiful type of hut is very much on the decline. It is costly to make and to keep in repair, and the thick straw roof is, admittedly, highly inflammable. A flying trip round Lake Victoria clearly shows how the straw roofs in the banana groves are being replaced by corrugated iron. This change may even have another reason, viz. the fact that fodder for cattle is in short supply and that the grass for roofs is hard to come by. No doubt, it is a question of time when the fine old Haya hut will have disappeared.

N 114 In the Southern Highlands, where I was given the opportunity to stay for three months at various Danish mission stations, I visited the village round the Rungwe mission, the neighbouring villages of Ilolo and Kikota, and some villages near the Rutenganio mission station. I made a trip to Lake Nyasa and another to the Poloto mountains. I must admit to a limited knowledge of drawing technique and of house construction, but I have measured a number of houses and sketched their plan and also the furnishings I found in them. The positioning of the various objects has been established.

N 361 [342] 356 The high standard of dwellings of the Banyakyusa is truly to be wondered at. The houses, clustered in villages, often along a winding street, lie intermingled with banana and coffee bushes. The houses are large and their interior is clean. Often two or three houses belong to one family, and, if so, will be grouped round a courtyard.

N 342 [824] Even if you could find houses built from sun-dried bricks and fired tiles, most were from bamboo with a grass roofing.

All houses stand on a clay base which, though not very high, no doubt means some protection against penetration of ground moisture during the heavy rains of April–June.

N [824] Besides bamboo, sometimes the bole of tree fern, *makeke*, is used in outer walls. Such tree fern stems have not the carrying capacity of bamboo, but they are far more resistant to rot. Among the other common features of the existing types of houses, should be mentioned the mud clods, the size of rolls that from the

N [237] [531] inside are pressed between the vertical bamboo poles; also, the inner wall is roughcast with a mixture of mud and cow manure; the floor is from tamped clay. In some places you find very fine floors in which a pattern has been rolled into the wet clay; to this end a short length of the stem of the banana cluster has been employed, viz. the length between the seats of the male and the female flowers. Also employed are another plant stem, or an empty corn cob.

N 354 515 In all houses where women live, there are one or more hearths. The presence of two hearths in one house usually means that the husband has two wives, each wife having her own hearth, either in the common house or in a house of her own.

N 342 The houses always have a kind of ceiling made from bamboo sticks and carried

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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patterns burned into the bamboo; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bottom is the natural partition of the bamboo cane.

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The house was standing on high, slightly slanting ground, and like the first mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the stores of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses; I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 70 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the centre post would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets; material for the baskets; and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fitted a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the loft she reached down a calfskin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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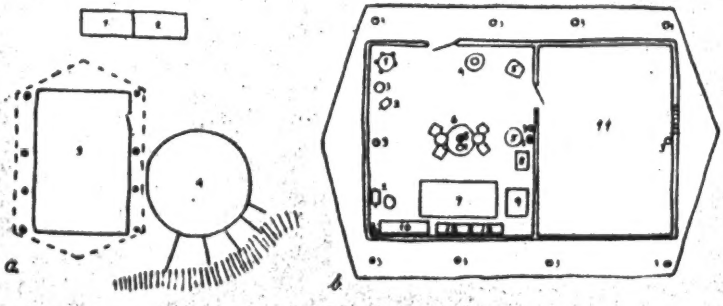

a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyelunya's houses. 1, hen-coop; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's *ifiluga* with roof supports along sides; 4, *isiunga* belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's *ifiluga* (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, *ikitete* (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

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The chief Wwamasika and his family after he had received from me my old "Klepper-Mantle" as a gift.

to enter his hut, where the patient was sitting on the ground with his back to the wall. To heal his patient of the pains, the doctor made some small incisions in his skin near the stomach by means of a triangular-shaped knife, and then he rubbed in the incisions a thick black juice taken from the horn of an antelope (the horn was called *kapembe*, pl. *ulupembe*). The juice was prepared from different roots and herbs as a medicine against stomach pains. In the horn were certain divisions for other medicines, and in each of these divisions was stuck a small (black) stick for removing the specific medicine from it. After this treatment the patient declared that he felt severe pains in the region of his stomach. I asked the doctor for some of his medicines, but he was unwilling to give me anything. Then I promised to bring him next day some European medicines hoping to get in exchange some of his medicaments.

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The following morning I returned. On this occasion I did acquire some of his medicines in exchange for various European tablets, especially as he was most fascinated with the kaliumpermanganatum[1] of which I gave him a few crystals, explaining to him the use and the dose; when I dissolved some of the crystals before his eyes, it probably seemed to him to be a mystical process. Among the medicines I received then from him was a medicine for luck, called *kwarusako*. Some of the inhabitants of the village, who had meantime appeared, were very unwilling for him to give me this medicine, and maintained that I would take with me all the luck of the village.

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On this second visit to the medicine-man, there was again a patient present, and I wanted to take a photograph of the scene because it was

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[1] [i.e., $KMnO_4$. – Analyst]

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After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubusangalufu* (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *unnyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *unnyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut *(ikibaga)*. A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats *(ubuleli*, pl. *imileli)* and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[25]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifituba* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans *(urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubuswigala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that

[25] Cf. *Fülleborn*, p. 381.

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Notes on the daily life of the Nyakyusa (Tanganyika Territory)

Cf. Sociologus 1951, I, 1 S. 53 ff.

By F. Rudolf Lehmann

192 576 *1. Greetings.* The first thing to strike a visitor to the Nyakyusa country north of Lake Nyasa on passing through one of the numerous picturesque villages surrounded by banana groves is the way of greeting customary among these people. *"Ukuponya"* is the Nyakyusa word for "to greet". In the morning you are greeted with the exclamation: *"ugonile* (pl. *mugonile)"*, which literally means: "Did you sleep well?" And you may answer in the same way, or, in fuller form as you can hear it from the mouth of the natives: *"ae'e ndaga, ugonile"*, or *"ugonile yoyoque"*. *"ae'e ndaga"* may be used with all answers, meaning: thanks! At noon or in the afternoon you will hear: *"uvombide"*, you have worked, or, have you worked? Then, according to the case, you may answer: *"muvombide avanda"*, you, men, have worked, or, generally: *"mwangere"*, which is equivalent to the Swahili: *"habari gani?"*. If you greet a person in the evening with the words: *"ugonege"*, may you sleep well, the person thus addressed will answer: *"kagone!"*.

234 [312] *2. Milking.* The first task in the daily life of the Nyakyusa people is for the men to milk the cows. This is done in the morning before the cattle are driven out to graze and again in the evening when they return. But the cattle are also driven back to the village at noon when [237 232] they are usually fumigated standing in the smoke of a fire for which cow dung and banana leaves are used, a process designed to remove vermin from the skin of the cattle. The animals seem to be very fond of this procedure. They stand quietly in the smoke gazing at the passers-by.

241 [462] *3. Hoeing.* "Hoeing is the work of men, planting weeding, reaping is the work of women. The men, young and old, hoe for about four hours on most mornings of the year; in the lower altitudes they begin well before sunrise and finish about 9 a. m., on the upland plateau they

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begin later and continue till noon or beyond. The energetic ones sometimes hoe again for an hour or two in the late afternoon. Different crops are planted at different seasons of the year so that there is always some hoeing to be done." (G. Wilson, Introduction, p. 260).

The putting of maize-grains as seed into the earth is the women's work, the sowing of millet *(malesi)* of both sexes. If you ask the men after they had come home from their work: *"Mukumbide ifivanya fya nongi?"*, "Whose fields did you hoe?", the answer often may be: *"Tukumbide ifivanya fya tata!"* We have hoed the fields of our father.

In former times, the Nyakyusa had a lot of ceremonies relating to the beginning of the hoeing season and of the beginning of the harvest-work. They are, however, nowadays nearly extinguished under the influence of European culture.

With respect to the beginning of the hoeing season, a very comprehensive ceremony had to be carried out by the chief in community whith the *unganga* (medicine man) for providing the fields with extraordinary *(-sisya)* power *(amaka)*: *amaka amasisya*, in this case: fertility.

When the crop was ripe, it was (at first) forbidden *(mwiko)* to take anything from the crop before the chief had given the permission. First the oldest male villagers informed the chief that it may be now the just time to give the crop free for the people, saying: "The people is hungry, we will now give them to eat!" Then the chief ordered that 6 or 8 (maize') corn-cobs were brought to him, and he sent these corn-cobs by a messenger to the (holy) offering-grove where they must be put down. After that has been correctly executed, he gave the permission for reaping the new crop.

(NB. It was believed that those corn-cobs put into the offering-grove were eaten especially from the leopards. The powderes bones of the leopards were considered important ingredients of the consecration drink which the chief had to take at his initiation ceremonies and which should give him the strength *(amaka)* of a leopard, so that he also was called "the leopard" or "the leopard chief".)

4. *Herding the Cattle and Cleansing the Stable.* The sociological importance of cattle among the Nyakyusa and the specific practice among them of herding the cattle by herdboys, that is also of highly sociological importance for the structure of the Nyakyusa society, is already described by G. Wilson (Introduction, p. 269 f).

The cleansing of the stables of which the Nyakyusa possess a great number of very well built ones, which have also sometimes a considerable length — apart from the cattle kraals —, is the task of

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe*. The pots of clay are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifitubo)* for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(ingurwe,* pig)

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usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. *Dress.* The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These

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291 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More
301 and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into
291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the
177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian
[439] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a
[556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was
482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger
[292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or
535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned
[302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts.
237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below